

Message Text

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 /086 W

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R 051645Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5596

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 2681

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJ: PARTY LEADERS HOLD ANTI-ALGERIAN PRESS CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: TWO OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS HELD PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 5 PRIMARILY TO DENOUNCE ALGERIA'S SAHARA POLICY. LEADERS CALLED FOR CREATION OF SAHARA LIBERATION COMMITTEE WHICH APPARENTLY TO EMBRACE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY AS WELL AS POLITICAL GROUPS. THEY ALSO DEMANDED THAT ARMY BE PREPARED TO SAVE SITUATION IN SAHARA IF NECESSARY, AND WERE CRITICAL OF WHAT THEY TERMED LESS THAN FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE OF ARAB AND AFRICAN BRETHREN AND OF UN SAHARA MISSION. PARTIES' HATE-ALGERIA CAMPAIGN SEEMS PART OF KING'S CARROT AND STICK APPROACH TO SAHARA PROBLEM. PARTIES SERVING IN LATTER CAPACITY WHILE PRIVATE DEMARCHES TO GOA CONTINUE. PERHAPS UNDERSTANDING KING'S TECHNIQUE, ALGERIAN EMBASSY HERE IS TAKING RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC

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VIEW OF SITUATION AND PROFESSES TO BELIEVE NEGOTIATED

SOLUTION POSSIBLE PROVIDE GOM SHOWS FLEXIBILITY.

2. ON JUNE 5 ISTIQLAL SECY GEN BOUCETTA AND SOCIALIST UNION LEADER BOUABID USED HOUR-LONG PRESS CONFERENCE AS VEHICLE FOR DENOUNCING ALGERIAN POLICY ON SAHARA. IN OPENING DECLARATION LEADERS CHARGED THAT GOA, THROUGH COMPLICITY WITH SPAIN AND BY ARMING AND ENCOURAGING AGENTS SOUGHT TO CREATE PHANTOM ENTITY WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY BECOME NEW ALGERIAN PROVINCE. LEADERS NOTED THAT ALGERIA TOOK THIS POSITION DESPITE MOROCCO'S UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF ALGERIAN REVOLUTION AND CONSTANT CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.

3. OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST FROM DECLARATION AND SUBSEQUENT QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WERE:

A. APPEAL TO ALGERIAN PEOPLE. AS THEY HAVE IN PAST, LEADERS DREW DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOA AND ALGERIAN PEOPLE. LATTER, THEY SAID, MUST BE MORE SYMPATHETIC THAN FORMER TO MOROCCO'S WISH FOR NATIONAL UNITY. LEADERS APPEALED PARTICULARLY TO FORMER ALGERIAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS WHO HAD "MIXED THEIR BLOOD WITH THAT OF THEIR MOROCCAN BROTHERS" IN MAGHREB INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE.

B. REJECTION OF SAHARA-BORDER AGREEMENT TRADE OFF. "CERTAIN ALGERIAN OFFICIAL CIRCLES", LEADERS NOTED, PROPOSED, IN RETURN FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING GOA ATTITUDE VIS-A-VIS MOROCCO'S "SAHARA PROVINCES", THAT MOROCCO RECOGNIZE "FAIT ACCOMPLI OF ALGERIA'S POSSESSION OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN PROVINCES OF SAHARA, NAMELY TINDOUF, SAOURA, TOUAT, TIDDIKELT, ETC." "THIS SORT OF BARGAINING UNACCEPTABLE TO OUR PEOPLE," LEADERS SAID. EXPANDING ON THIS THEME, LEADERS NOTED ALGERIA'S RESISTANCE ON SAHARA SELF-DETERMINATION. GOA SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER SELF-DETERMINATION FOR TINDOUF ETC., THEY SAID.

C. COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION. LEADERS SAID COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION OF SAHARA SHOULD BE FORMED WITH PARTICIPATION OF ALL MOROCCAN POLITICAL GROUPS. IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF FOLLOWING CONFERENCE, USFP SOURCE SAID LEADERS' IDEA

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WAS CREATION OF COMMITTEE IN WHICH GOVERNMENT AND ARMY AS WELL AS PARTIES WOULD PARTICIPATE.

D. MOROCCANS IMPRISONED IN ALGERIA: LEADERS REFERRED TO PRESS REPORTS THAT 17 F POLISARIO MEMBERS HAD BEEN IMPRISONED AND THREATENED WITH DEATH NEAR TINDOUF AFTER THEY DECLARED THAT THEY WERE MOROCCAN. PARTIES, LEADERS SAID, HAD CALLED UPON GOM TO LIBERATE THESE MEN.

E. ALGERIAN TROOPS IN TINDOUF REGION: LEADERS REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO BUILD-UP OF ALGERIAN TROOPS IN AND AROUND TINDOUF AND NOTED THAT ALGERIAN ARMY WAS BASIS OF F POLISARIO'S STRENGTH. FOLLOWING PRESS CONFERENCE, OMAR BENJELLOUN, EDITOR OF USFP'S NEWSPAPER, AL MOHARRIR, TOLD EMBOFF HE HAD RAISED QUESTION OF ALGERIAN BUILD-UP WITH LEADING FLN MEMBER DURING RECENT VISIT TO ALGERIA. WHEN FLN MEMBER SAID THIS HAD BEEN DONE FOR "STRATEGIC-GEO-POLITICAL REASONS," BENJELLOUN SAID HE RETORTED, "YOUR COUNTRY IS LITTLE YET YOU TALK LIKE METTERNICH OR KISSINGER."

F. MAURITANIA: BOTH LEADERS NOTED MOROCCO'S DESIRE FOR INITIATIVE AIMED AT CREATING BROAD RELATIONSHIP OF INTER-DEPENDENCE WITH MAURITANIA. THEY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE SITUATION VIS-A-VIS MAURITANIA WAS "DELICATE," PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF GIRM'S CLOSE TIES WITH GOA.

G. TUNISIA: BOTH LEADERS CONGRATULATED TUNISIA FOR TOTAL SUPPORT OF MOROCCAN POSITION. BOUCETTA NOTED THIS SUPPORT HAD BEEN RE-AFFIRMED DURING HIS JUNE 2-3 VISIT TO TUNIS.

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H. OTHER ARAB AND AFRICAN STATES: LEADERS THANKED ARABS AND AFRICANS FOR SUPPORT OF PRINCIPLE THAT SAHARA SHOULD BE LIBERATED, BUT AT SAME TIME NOTED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THESE GOVERNMENTS, APPARENTLY FOR FEAR OF PROVOKING ALGERIANS, UNWILLING GIVE TOTAL SUPPORT TO MOROCCAN POSTITION. LEADERS CALLED UPON FOREIGN JOURNALISTS PRESENT TO INFORM THEIR COUNTRIES OF JUSTICE OF MOROCCO'S CAUSE.

I. UN MISSION: LEADERS OBVIOUSLY CRITICAL OF MISSION'S FAILURE TO COME OUT IN FAVOR OF MOROCCO. MISSION LEADER AKE'S PUBLIC STATEMENT, BOUABID NOTED, WAS CONFINED TO SAYING, "THEY TOLD ME, THEY TOLD ME, THEY TOLD ME..." AND REFLECTED NO INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENTS. LEADERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY THOUGHT MISSION'S SIGNIFICANCE IN CURRENT SITUATION LIMITED.

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4. CONFERENCE BROKE UP FOLLOWING BOUABID'S PRONOUNCEMENT THAT MOROCCAN ARMED FORCES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FIGHT IF NECESSARY FOR SAKE OF NATIONAL UNION. JUNE 5 AL MOHARRIR WAS REPORTED SEIZED SEVERAL HOURS AFTER IT HAD APPEARED, APPARENTLY BECAUSE ITS EDITORIAL CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT MOROCCAN ARMY MUST BE PREPARED TO THWART GREED OF THOSE OPPOSING MOROCCO'S SAHARA POLICY.

5. ALGERIAN ATTITUDE: ALGERIANS HERE SEEM TO BE REMAINING COOL IN FACE OF INCREASED MOROCCAN HOSTILITY. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JUNE 4, ALGERIAN COUNSBWOR EMPHASIZED VIEW THAT PRECIPITATED SPANISH WITHDRAWAL HIGHLY UNLIKELY AND THAT THERE WAS PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE END OF YEAR FOR COMPLETION OF ICJ AND UN PROCESS AND COORDINATION OF ARAB AND SPANISH POSITIONS, WHICH

IN ALGERIAN OPINION WOULD BE TO GET MOROCCANS TO ACCEPT DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUE, ALONG LINES SPAIN HAD PROPOSED. IF THERE WAS IN FACT MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN AGREEMENT ON FUTURE OF SAHARA, AS WIDELY SPECULATED, THIS SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED AND DISCUSSED, HE ASSERTED; CURRENT MOROCCAN STRESS ON NOT GIVING UP "ONE INCH" OF TERRITORY DID NOT SEEM TO LEAVE ROOM FOR MAURITANIAN CLAIM, HOWEVER. ON LONG-PENDING MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN BORDER AGREEMENT, ALGERIAN COMMENTED THAT MOROCCAN RATIFICATION WOULD BE GESTURE OF GOOD WILL, BUT NOT OF ANY PARTICULAR CONCRETE VALUE. ALGERIA CONSIDERED THE AGREEMENT TO BE IN EFFECT

AND FINAL IN ANY CASE, HE UNDERLINED.

6. COMMENT: PRESS CONFERENCE GAVE NEW DIMENSION TO
POLITICAL PARTIES' HATE-ALGERIA CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS BEEN
BUILDING FOR SOME WEEKS. NOTE OF DISSATISFACTION WITH UN
MISSION PROBABLY REFLECTS FEAR THAT GOA-BACKED F POLISARIO
BEGINNING TO STEAL SAHARA SHOW AND THAT ESCALATION
OF DISPUTE MIGHT BE NEEDED. KING HASSAN IS FOND OF USING
CARROT AND STICK SIMULTANEOUSLY IN HIS DIPLOMACY
AND IT IS CLEAR THAT PARTIES CURRENTLY SERVING IN LATTER
CAPACITY WHILE PRIVATE DEMARCHES TO GOA CONTINUE.
ALGERIAN ATTITUDE AS RELECTED HERE PERHAPS SHOWS
RECOGNITION OF KING'S TACTICS.

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